Marketing Job Postings to Reach Your Audience

Our Vision: We envision the continuous development of a leading-edge workforce.

Our Mission: Engage partners to find solutions to local workforce development needs.

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Introduction

A job posting is an advertisement. It can be someone's first interaction with your company. Are you making a good impression or a bad one? Are you connecting with the talent you need?

The information and advice in this report come directly from your target audience - local job seekers!

In 2023, the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin conducted feedback sessions with job seekers about job postings. Job seekers shared general feedback and then reviewed individual job postings that were provided by local employers. Job seekers wrote down what they liked and did not like about the postings, then discussed this feedback as a group and gave advice on how the postings could be improved.

In total, 12 real job postings were reviewed, representative of a range of industries and occupations within the Waterloo, Wellington, and Dufferin areas. Company names and identifying information were removed from the job postings to remove bias and to encourage honest feedback, both positive and negative. Further general feedback was collected in an online survey of job seekers.

Want to know what two things were mentioned by almost every single job seeker?

1. Include the salary/wage!

2. Make your job posting easy to read!

This makes sense. Approximately **half** of the adult population in Canada scores below high-school literacy levels[1], and a well-written job posting is quicker to review for everyone.

Knowing that the wage matches your needs means it is worth your time to apply. Only half of the job seekers at our feedback sessions said yes, they would apply to jobs that do not list wage information. An additional 30% said they might, but that these postings "go to the bottom of the pile", or that they would first try finding the salary info elsewhere online. During a low unemployment rate, many of your applicants are already in jobs and want to know if yours will be a step up or down before they customize their resume.

This report summarizes what we heard from job seekers into actionable steps to improve your job postings. Further Resources are available at the back of the report. Our job seekers hope that their input will make a difference in the postings they see in the future!

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[1] https://www.cbc.ca/radio/costofliving/let-s-get-digital-from-bitcoin-to-stocktok-plus-what-low-literacy-means-for-canada-s-economy-1.5873703/nearly-half-of-adult-canadians-struggle-with-literacy-and-that-s-bad-for-the-economy-1.5873757

Making the Right First Impression

Formatting

Job seekers view many job postings. Help yours stand out for the right reasons! Many tips for job posting format are the same as for job seekers in their resumes and cover letters.

- ☐ "Facts, not fluff." Get straight to the responsibilities, requirements, wage, and hours.
- ☐ Use plain language and short sentences:
  - Quicker to read & prevents misunderstandings.
  - Use features in Word, Grammarly, or other services to check content for readability score, passive voice, grammar, and spelling.
  - Increase your organization's AODA compliance by investing in Clear Language training.
  - Your local Literacy Upgrading organizations may offer inexpensive employer services or training.
- ☐ Use section headings and bullet points. No long paragraphs.
- ☐ 1 page or less. Longer postings lose attention. Supply details through website links or later in the screening process.
- ☐ Check that any re-used content applies to the new role.
- ☐ Check that any website links are not broken and that they go to the right location.
- ☐ Avoid repeating content in multiple sections.

"The format is long and annoying as a job seeker. Spend all day reading job postings and it takes forever to get to the posting itself."

"The posting mentioned benefits – but for full-time. Not applicable to this part-time job.

(THIS SUCKS!)"

"Written like it comes from a lawyer's office. Exhausting to read."

Tone

Tone is the first thing that tells the job seeker about your work environment.

☐ Match your workplace culture:

- Casual and conversational/structured and formal

☐ Demonstrate a welcoming first impression: Upbeat / Friendly / Positive / Confident

☐ Share both what you want AND what you offer, including the positives of the job and work environment.

☐ Check for rigid or legal phrases that are one-sided or sound demanding (often in bold font).

- Job seekers believe these hint at a workplace power dynamic that will be unfriendly to them
- i.e. "Do not…" statements, or asking for full-time availability for a part-time job with no estimate of hours

"Overview section – wanted to keep reading – had some energy to it. Doing something right."

"Sets the tone for how I'll be treated. Cold. Legal. Instead, discuss this further in the interview, or use kinder phrasing: "typical hours" or "may change".

(In response to "Posted hours do not constitute a guarantee that shifts will not be subject to change")

"Would you apply to this job?"

"Unsure – seems like the employer isn't worker-centric."

Reaching Your Audience

Job Title

Help the right candidates find your job postings! Your job title should:

☐ Match terms that job seekers will search for (keywords)

☐ Allow online job board algorithms to sort your job into the correct categories

- Use common job titles like the ones used in the [National Occupational Classification (NOC)](#) profiles.

☐ Include the words "part-time" or "casual" in the title (if applicable)

☐ Give a clear impression of what the job is

☐ Prioritize titles for your target audience instead of naming them to suit internal procedures or organizational preferences.

- Avoid internal jargon or acronyms that are not a common search term for job seekers
- Examples to avoid: "Wms Consultant", "Meat", "Clerk 2", or teaching positions that include education course codes in the job title but not the word "Teacher" or "Professor".

> "What makes a job posting good?"
>
> "When it matches the actual title.
> i.e. 'Inventory Controller' vs. 'Forklift'."

> "I think job title does not match with the requirements as a whole."

> "I would not apply as it is unclear based on job posting."

Wage

Wage was the most discussed topic in our Job Seeker Feedback Sessions. Not listing the wage or severely underpaying for the role angered job seekers and created negative impressions of the company – not just the job.

- ☐ List the wage!

  - Postings with no wage are assumed to pay poorly or to be scam postings.

  - Many will not invest their time in applying - especially job seekers who are already employed elsewhere.

  - Job seekers may be able to find your wage info elsewhere (Glassdoor, online reviews, employees, past postings, etc.)

- ☐ Avoid vague salary ranges. What experiences and skills equal how high someone will be placed?

- ☐ The wage should match job expectations to attract people: skill level, experience, education, and seniority.

- ☐ Be competitive. Mention any regular pay increases. Be aware of what competitors are paying.

> "List the salary on the job posting.
> I do not like the idea of wasting my time creating a resume and cover letter, and potentially taking time off work for an interview, only to be told the salary is much lower than I can accept."

> "Provide a HELPFUL salary range in the posting. A range of $75k-85k is helpful; a range of $50-100k is not. If the salary range is large, give examples of the prior experiences/skills that will impact the offer."

> "A minimum wage job should not require 3-5 years of experience, a university degree, or supervising other employees."

Needs & Wants

Job Duties & Responsibilities

☐ Confirm that Human Resources and the Hiring Manager have the same expectations for the role.

☐ Keep job descriptions up to date so job postings based on them represent the position accurately.

☐ Be clear & concise. Bullet-points strongly preferred.

☐ Tasks are written in plain language and are not over-inflated

☐ Help the job seeker quickly understand:

- Day-to-day responsibilities

- Where and who they would work with (personnel/department)

- Which position(s) they will report to and/or supervise

- Short-term expectations and long-term goals of the role

☐ Realistic expectations

- Does it ask for skills or tasks beyond what would be expected for the scope of that role?

- Does it sound like 2 or 3 jobs lumped into one? Indicate % of the time if there are multiple main tasks.

"Job duties are often not included, and it does not seem that the companies have their actual job description posted online.

Other times job postings are so long and with so many requirements it looks like they put two or three jobs into one job posting."

"Would you apply?"

"Yes, but hesitant – difficult to picture the day-to-day."

"'Other duties as assigned' gives no valuable info. Sounds like it's coming from the legal department." (Feelings of mistrust.)

"Seems to be looking for senior or mid-level, but advertises as an Assistant."

Qualifications

When Unemployment Rates are low (around 5% or lower), job seekers have more employment opportunities and can be more selective. The information in the Qualifications section will help them decide their fit for the role and if it is worth their time to apply.

- ☐ Use clear, specific language about the skills and abilities needed.

- ☐ Avoid long lists of skills – are they all mandatory? Is the job worth it for the wage?

- ☐ Be clear on which skills are "required" vs "nice to have". It adds clarity and encourages the right people to apply.

- ☐ Include hard skills and soft skills.

- ☐ Realistic expectations: makes sense for the job and listed salary.

- ☐ Avoid "Excellent communication skills":

  - Too broad. People are skilled in some areas and less confident in others.

  - Differentiate between listening, speaking, reading, writing, customer service language, persuasive language, etc.

  - Include examples of tasks in your workplace at the highest level of communication skills needed. i.e. professional emails, presentations to shareholders, in-person customer service, or editing technical manuals.

  - For English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, supplying an estimate of Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) or IELTS skill level can help them assess if they are ready for the needs of the job.

- ☐ Focus on skills rather than credentials. People changing careers or with international training can better customize their application with the experiences they have that match your needs.

- ☐ Is the credential a regulatory requirement? Mention this.

> "Very long job postings that don't clearly articulate the skills and abilities for the role."

> "Lots of requirements listed. Asking a lot. Does someone with all these skills exist? Would someone want to have this job with so many responsibilities? Is this long list worth the wage?"

> "Champagne requirements for beer-level pay."

Job Seeker Comments:

"The variety and level of skills expected for the role appears managerial level, but this salary level should be for an assistant role."

"No essays about qualities they are looking for in an employee".

"Severe misalignment between the title/duties and skills/qualifications. Most job posts read as 'We want a unicorn'."

"An "entry-level position" with an entry-level wage should not require any experience - these jobs should be available to new grads or people switching careers into a new field."

Getting to Work

Location

Reduce no-shows! Does the info you supply help the job seeker reliably get to the job or interview?

- ☐ The city or location of the job is clear in the posting and is tagged correctly on any job board platforms.
- ☐ Specify: On-site / Remote / Hybrid.
  - Do not list a job as "remote" if it requires time on-site.
  - If hybrid, how many days on-site are expected? Is this flexible?
- ☐ Remote opportunities provide a bigger talent pool and allow candidates with transit, childcare, geographical, or other barriers to apply.
- ☐ Is on-site work a necessity? A short explanation of **why** can reduce the number of applicants who are not the right fit.
  - Examples: the work involves a physical product, supervision, data security, company culture values informal collaboration opportunities, etc.

"Add the remote/in-person working requirements. Adjust hours of work to accommodate the lack of available childcare and transit schedules."

"Offer hybrid and remote work as the standard, not a perk. It's 2023, it's time to accept that the workforce expectations are changing or get left behind."

Commute

Due to affordability, environmental values, or being new to the area, many job seekers do not have access to a personal vehicle.

☐ Supply public transit details. List which routes or main intersections are nearby.

☐ Own Car or Driver's license needed? List why.

- Is travel a frequent requirement of the job?

- Is public transit unavailable in your area?

- Are other transportation methods (carpooling, ride-share apps, etc.) or shift flexibility an option?

Hours

☐ Specify: Full-time / Part-time / Casual

☐ List the number of hours per week. If it is not a set number of hours, what is a typical week?

☐ List the time work starts & finishes.

☐ Which shifts? What kind of rotation?

☐ Define "flexible" hours or hybrid arrangements so potential applicants know if it will work for their needs.

> "Jobs that require complete availability, but do not offer any guarantee or expectation of a typical number of hours per week... sets your employee up for precarious employment."

Why Should Candidates Choose You?

Talk Up Your Benefits

Are you mentioning all the perks you have to offer?

- ☐ Health benefits. Dental & Vision included?
- ☐ RRSP / Pension / Bonus structures
- ☐ Potential for career growth or advancement
- ☐ Training opportunities
- ☐ Vacation time beyond what is required by law
- ☐ Casual dress
- ☐ Fair mileage reimbursement
- ☐ Tools provided (work laptop, cellphone, work boot allowance, etc.)
- ☐ Opportunities to take part in the business (i.e. Health & Safety Committee)
- ☐ Employee or team events
- ☐ Free meals

Talk Up Your Benefits

'About Us'

Job seekers want to envision your company, and workplace, and avoid scam postings, but they also want this section to be short! Most will research the company further if the posting interests them. Links in a job posting can do a lot of the work for you.

☐ Be brief. Beyond a few sentences, direct them to more information on your website.

☐ Tell the applicant why they will want to work there! What impact does their work have? How will they be treated?

☐ "A great place to work" is not helpful. What makes it great?

☐ Include your mission, values, or guiding principles if relevant or link to them on your website.

☐ Can job seekers envision your work environment or culture?

- Add photos or videos to your website, social media, YouTube, Google company profile, etc. Your online profile and presence say a lot about you.

☐ Have you won awards? Have good online ratings? Mention this!

☐ Company Reviews: Job seekers will search Glassdoor, LinkedIn, Google, etc.

- Job seekers see employer responses to negative comments too – they hint at how an employee may be treated. Do you ignore concerns? Do you treat others with understanding and respect?

"Would like company website linked for easy research – want to know products, employee reviews, how successful (not likely to bankrupt – looking for stable company to work for)".

"Very wordy on what they want, however nothing on what they offer or work culture description."

Diversity Statements & Land Acknowledgements

Job seekers look at job postings similarly to how employers view a resume – initially a quick skim before narrowing down to where they want to spend their time. Are your statements adding value and doing what they intend to do?

- ☐ Caution! Job seekers were annoyed when these statements:
  - Were long or got in the way of quickly finding the wage, duties, hours, and job requirements. Consider placing your statements after these pieces.
  - Sounded inauthentic or used legal jargon.
- ☐ Positive impact:
  - Some job seekers felt more included and encouraged to apply.
  - Job seekers of all backgrounds like to learn that a company shares their values.
- ☐ Consider statements that imply you have given thought to the experience of these groups:
  - i.e. "international references or credentials welcome".
- ☐ Be brief and use clear, simple language. Use a link or a reference to your website if you wish to supply longer content.

> "[Long statements] sound like they are trying too hard to convince you of something... makes me feel nervous".

> "It is open to diverse individuals".
>
> [In response to a diversity statement that used the phrases:
>
> "We seek applicants who embrace our values of ....."; and
> "We encourage applications from applicants who...".]

Accommodating Disabilities

Job seeker opinions on Disability Accommodation statements were mixed. Many thought these statements were inauthentic, "came from the legal department", or added to the length of content to read before getting to the job requirements.

☐ Be authentic. Use plain language and ensure company actions are in line with your policies. Consider mentioning why you offer accommodation.

☐ Avoid general phrasing that puts perceived pressure on the applicant to disclose a disability or mental illness at the point of applying (i.e. "If you require accommodation... let us know").

☐ Situation-specific statements and using the term "requests" instead of "requirements" were perceived as being more open to the candidate choosing if or when to disclose an accommodation need.

- i.e. "We are committed to [...]. If you have any application, interview, or workplace accommodation requests, please contact ...".

☐ Include clear 'next step' information. How or when should the applicant contact you?

☐ Mentioning types or examples of accommodation available sounds more genuine and helpful but job seekers admitted this could get too long or miss types of inclusion.

☐ Including more Accommodation info beyond the posting (i.e. a link to a section on the company website) would allow the job posting to be brief but still have the information available.

"Felt like common sense or clichés – do they need to be included at all?"

"If you require accommodation... let us know."

"Requires someone to make the decision to disclose right at the point of applying. Would rather this happen at/after a phone screening."

Application Process

Timeline

- ☐ Including timelines shows respect for the applicant and their time:
  - Deadline to apply
  - Timeframe to be contacted/interviewed
  - Job Start Date
- ☐ Consider the applicant's experience throughout the screening & hiring process.
- ☐ Avoid complicated or lengthy screening processes, while still allowing time for the candidate to give 2 weeks' notice to their current employer.
- ☐ Job seekers notice when postings have been up a long time or are re-posted often. The assumption is that there are retention issues or that the company isn't actually planning to hire. If you're hiring for multiple positions, mention this.

How To

☐ How to apply is clear:

- Which person, role, or department should the cover letter be addressed to?

- Any instructions for people applying to more than one position?

- Is a cover letter needed? How many pages should the resume be?

☐ Avoid complicated or time-consuming methods to apply:

- Dislike being forced to make an account with email and password to apply.

- Requiring a resume to be uploaded AND filling out forms asking for similar info like work and education history is time-consuming and redundant.

☐ Be aware of technical barriers:

- For jobs with low digital skill needs, have ways to apply other than resume or file attachments. i.e. online forms or apply in person.

- Check that job seekers can apply easily with their smartphone.

☐ Job seekers are frustrated by being asked about **their** salary expectations

☐ If applicants have a question about the job posting, what should they do, or who should they contact?

"Applied to the same job at 3 different locations and had to take the same online behavioural questionnaire three times."

"Instructions not clear about cover letter especially if applying for 3 different roles."

"Not listing a name that we can address the cover letter to – then we have to address the cover letter to "to whom it may concern," which then looks bad on our cover letters!"

"Specific email address to send application to. More confidence it is going to an actual person vs. just getting saved unseen in a database."

Jobseeker Feelings After Applying
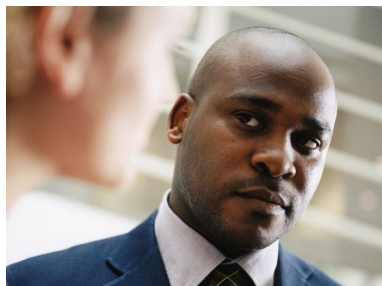
Job Seeker Feelings After Applying

We all know looking for work can be tiring. Here is what some of our job seekers had to say about their experiences:

"Sending applications and never hearing back, even after being selected for an interview."

"[I wish employers would] only post jobs with intention to hire."

"Bait and switch.
Apply to one job but get interviewed for a different position entirely."

"Dishonest. Did not match what was discussed in the job posting."

"Sending into the void."

"Employers post a job that shows the wage they intend to pay, then ask an applicant how much they are willing to work for then decide on the applicant due to that."

Resources

Resources

Clear Writing Support

Clear Writing will help the right candidates find and understand what you are looking for, prevent frustrations, and even help the job board algorithms sort your job correctly. It also improves your AODA compliance.

Connect with local organizations to learn about employer services or training that may be available, including Clear Writing, Organizational Needs Assessments, and more!

- ☐ [Project READ Literacy Network](#) (Waterloo Region & Wellington County)
- ☐ [Peel-Halton-Dufferin Adult Learning Network](#) (Dufferin County)

Examples of Clear Writing:

- ☐ [Government of Canada Clear communication guide](#)
- ☐ [Province of Ontario style guide](#)

Editing Tools

Check and edit your job posting quickly using features and tools such as:

- ☐ [Readability score](#) in MS Word: The Flesch-Kincaid score estimates the document's readability at a U.S. grade level. Almost half of Canadians have literacy skills below a high school level.
- ☐ [Grammarly](#) – one example of a tool that helps fix voice tone, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and more. A paid account has additional features.

Hiring, Retention & Assessing the Competition

- ☐ [Employer Resource Corner](#) (at FindYourJob.ca)
  - Compilation of local Hiring & Retention resources
- ☐ [Employer Account](#) (at FindYourJob.ca > Job Portal)
  - Get wage, industry, & occupation data pulled from 30+ job boards.
  - Assess your competition: follow job postings by industry or occupation.
- ☐ [WIN^WR](#)
  - Employer resource in Waterloo Region to support your recruitment process.

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